

# CHINA TO-DAY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIGHER EDUCATION



*Chun-Jien Pao, M.A., PhD*  
*Consul-General for the Republic of China*

## *Sixth Morrison Lecture*

The sixth annual Morrison Lecture was delivered at the Australian Institute of Anatomy on Tuesday, 4th May, 1937. Dr. Chun-Jien Pao, M.A., Ph.D., the Consul-General for the Republic of China, was the Lecturer. He chose as his subject "China To-day: with Special Reference to Higher Education". So many residents of Canberra wished to hear about China from Dr. Pao that all attending could not be accommodated within the Lecture Theatre.

Canon W.J. Edwards, Headmaster of the Canberra Grammar School, occupied the chair. A keen student of international affairs, he prefaced his introduction of Dr. Pao to the audience with a plea for a better understanding between all nations. He pointed out that barriers of time and distance being in these days broken down, the world has become a unity, and modern man must equip himself for this new era with a deeper knowledge of all other nations, especially of the culture of those countries which are his geographical neighbours.

Several telegrams of felicitation were received and messages of goodwill came from the following interested well wishers: K.T. Loh, the Editor of the Chinese Times Ltd.; Tsao Men-Yen, the Chinese Vice-Consul; D.Y. Narme; the Chinese Nationalist Party of Australia; and Ambrose Pratt, the Australian author.

Mr. Robert Ewing moved a vote of thanks to Dr. Pao, expressing the keen interest of all present in the programme of national reconstruction in China, as outlined by Dr. Pao. The President of the Royal Society in

Australia, Dr. B.T. Dickson, moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman, and all present adjourned to the Northern Museum, where, as guests of Sir Colin and Lady MacKenzie, they had opportunity during supper of meeting the distinguished lecturer.

### *Address*

It is a great honour and privilege to me that I am awarded the opportunity to deliver an address under the lectureship in memory of a great son of Australia and an acknowledged friend of China, Dr. George Ernest Morrison, and to stimulate interest in the art, science and literature of my country. As it is only through mutual co-operation that world prosperity can be attained and international peace assured, the promotion of a better cultural understanding among the family of nations is of primary importance. Political understanding and economic co-operation, if they are to serve as a means of consolidating relations between nations must be preceded or at least accompanied by an intensive exchange of ideas. Only in this way will any effort for international co-operation be crowned with success.

Between Australia and China there has always been a cordial relationship, but it is, as one may say, only economic and commercial in nature. The founding of the Morrison Lectureship is certainly timely, and, to use a Chinese expression, has applied "the right medicine to cure the disease." Although merely a student of political economy, I, when requested to deliver this year's lecture, did not hesitate to consent, trusting that in addressing such a distinguished gathering as is here this evening, I may have the opportunity at least to show my sincere support towards the achievement for a closer relationship between the two great countries bordering the same ocean.

As an acquaintance with the actual conditions of my country, especially at the present epoch-making period, would be valuable to men of world affairs, I venture to choose as the subject of my address this evening: "China To-day, with Special Reference to Higher Education", with the hope that in presenting this picture I may be able to give you a glimpse of China's national development during the last few years, which is really much more than the bare record shows. The progress has been made in the face of a combination of difficulties and disappointments such as no other country in the world has had to deal with. In Europe, the United States and Australia during the past few years, political and social experiences have been in progress which are of tremendous interest and importance. China is groping her way through similar difficulties complicated by many other problems which do not vex European, American and Australian statesmen in efforts to better the conditions of their people.

In old China, or China yesterday, leaders when encountered by obstacles sat with their hands tucked in their sleeves resignedly waiting for the will of Heaven to work itself out in some way, for better or worse, but in young China, or China to-day, leaders grimly determine to battle along and do their utmost to overcome whatever is in the path. They lay stress upon mass education that will help the people to reach the stage of appreciating what they are striving to do and to obtain such fundamental civic knowledge as citizens of the Republic should possess. The "will to do" is there in modern China—the determination to make China a peaceful and prosperous country, able to take her rightful place along with other great nations free and independent, and not only willing but capable of exercising her power with other progressive peoples to establish a better international understanding throughout the world for the advancement of civilization of mankind.

When did the making of modern China begin? Many answers could be given, each with its own justification. The fact that there is such a thing as historical continuity, and also the different individual points of view, makes it difficult to fix a definite date. While giving due weight to the processes of evolution of early days in connexion with the making of modern China, for the sake of clearness of my address, I choose 1911, the date of the founding of the Republic, three years before the European War, as the beginning of modern China. But constructive work in the real sense had not been started until the establishment of the National Government in Nanking in 1927. For more than 70 years, from the Opium War in 1839 to the end of the Manchu régime in 1911, China had faced nothing but her military defeats and was bound hand and foot by treaties concluded on an unequal basis. Internally during that period the Government was incapable of guiding the ship of the State to meet the needs of the people. Revolutions started and succeeded. But in the first fifteen years of the Republic, regional ideas still dominated the minds of militarists and formed obstacles in the path of development. The incessant occurrence of international incidents, the conspicuous absurdity of the militarists, the communist disturbances, and natural calamities such as floods, droughts and plagues during those years, caused a phenomenal growth of national consciousness and gave rise to a nationalist movement under Kuomintang—the Nationalist party—leadership. Nationalism rapidly gained in momentum and swept over the country. The National Government today, according to observers of Chinese affairs, has accomplished with difficulties: unity in the country, confidence in self-help and self-reliance, and a cultural awakening.

The first task of the National Government was to unify the country by means of reconstruction which, in accordance with Dr. Sun Yat Sen's plan of national reconstruction, is to be carried out in three periods; the period of military operations, the period of tutelage and the period of constitutionalism.

The central event of the first period was the Northern Punitive Expedition under the command of General Chiang Kai-Shek, whose military genius and seasoned statesmanship have, during the past ten years, made history for New China. Marching his divisions of cadets from the Pearl River Valley to the Yangtze Basin, General Chiang, in less than a year, was able to bring under Kuomintang control the entire territory south of the Yangtze River. Despite serious obstacles in the northward drive, the Nationalist rule was subsequently extended to North China by the end of 1928, when the country was unified.

The period of tutelage followed military unification. During this period the Kuomintang is entrusted with the responsibility of guiding the destiny of the country and educating the people for constitutional government. Sovereignty is vested in the National Congress of Kuomintang delegates which, during recess, functions through an elected Central Executive Committee. The latter, in turn, creates the Standing Committee, which directs the National Government through the Central Political Council. Inaugurated at Canton on 1st July, 1925, the National Government was moved to Hangkow, 1st January, 1927. On 18th April, in the same year, the seat of government was transferred to Nanking, which has since become the capital of China.

China today stands on the threshold of the third period of the revolutionary development—Constitutional Government. In order to usher in this period, the Legislative Council has prepared a draft of the Permanent Constitution which will be submitted to the forthcoming National People's Congress on 12th November this year at Nanking for enactment and adoption. Upon enforcement of the Constitution, the period of political tutelage will be concluded and Constitutional Government inaugurated in the country.

The political reconstruction based upon the two principles of the Kuomintang, namely, nationalism and democracy, was followed by economic reconstruction by which the principle of livelihood of the party is to be carried out. In early days there were institutions that met the then existing requirements of the people and the need to change or raise the general standard of living might not be as imperative as in recent years. But China to-day, since political unity is secured, realizes more clearly than ever she did before that her fate depends mainly upon the proper circulation and a sound development of her wealth, and that her prosperity would not be possible if the economic phase of people's life remains static and impoverished. It is recognition of this fact which accelerated the work of economic reconstruction.

The economic reconstruction plans are carried out separately but cooperatively by the Ministries of Finance, Industries and Communications and the National Economic Council. As the speed with which

that work will be carried out chiefly depends upon financial considerations to the Ministry of Finance is given the responsibility of solving the fiscal side. It has succeeded already in the adjustment of national, provincial and local taxation, particularly in the direction of alleviating the people from burdensome and excessive levies. The recent currency reform which brought to an end a system of confusion of silver values to a standardized dollar system is another notable achievement of the Finance Ministry. The Ministry of Industries, conscious of the fact that the agricultural population comprises more than 80 per cent of the total population, and that farmlands extend throughout the length and breadth of the country, launched a scientific and adaptable rural rehabilitation programme by establishing the Farm Credit Bureau which is to serve as the central organ of the agricultural activities, and also as a link between the financial circles and the farming interests. The Ministry has also mapped out plans for the advancement of agriculture, the investigation of rural districts, the improvement of agricultural products, and the promotion of farm movements and forestry. In the mining industry and in commercial welfare it has accomplished much in encouraging the exploitation of new mines, mineral or non-mineral; in giving assistance to private businesses; in the guidance of foreign trade, and the compilation of an economic handbook. The Ministry of Communications conquered many obstacles recently in its work for the extension of the postal service, including postal savings and remittance banking facilities; the development of mercantile marine service; and telegraphs and long-distance telephones. The promotion of civil aviation and the inaugurating of well-mapped air lines constitute a surprising and wonderful achievement of this Ministry. The National Economic Council undertakes the work of highway construction, conservancy and irrigation, public health, and such important tasks as reviving the tea, silk, and cotton industries. The achievements of the Council cannot be surpassed. The political unity of the country facilitated the work of economic reconstruction which in turn, through the increase of means of transport and communications, helps to tie the country together making it independent and free among the family of nations.

The idea that only a staple economic basis can permanently guarantee the security of the State, however, is not actually a new guiding principle in the Chinese theory of government. Even as early as about 2200 B.C., Great Yu was selected to succeed Emperor Shun, because of his reputation as a hydraulic engineer, and his administrative achievements were practically all of an economic nature. Mencius, the foremost exponent of Chinese political philosophy, says: "There are men of education who, without certainty of a livelihood, are able to maintain a stout heart. As to the people at large, however, if they have not the certainty of a livelihood they give way to despair. And in despair, there is nothing

which they will not do in the way of self-abandonment or moral deflection, of depravity and of wild licence." Emperors of different dynasties each year performed the ceremony of ploughing eight furrows of land in their capacity as Supreme Husbandman, to show a keen interest in promoting the economic welfare of their subjects. It was only towards the middle of the nineteenth century, that the Manchu Government, burdened by the European commercial and industrial expansion and intoxicated by selfish and short-sighted motives, ignored the problem of livelihood. For a decade and a half, the Republic, at the transitional period which naturally gave rise to chaos in society and caused misery to the people, was busily engaged in providing measures of remedy only for whatever appeared urgent. It cannot be disputed that to leave the country's industrial development to the uncontrolled operation of the forces of individual capitalism was impossible. *Laissez faire* as an economic policy has long been discredited. The National Government, therefore, with the wholehearted support and co-operation of the people, must not only be capable of looking after the public economic welfare, but be able to control and regulate it positively and constructively in accordance to the principle of livelihood. This, in general, as Dr. Sun Yat Sen has stated, is to equalize land ownership and control capital, to meet the present needs of the people, and to avoid an undesirable class struggle. It is this state of economic reconstruction of China to-day which differs from that of China in bygone days.

Parallel to the political and economic reconstruction, the national authorities, as well as educational leaders, in order to create a new civilization to meet the new social order concentrated their action on cultural reform. The new cultural movement started in 1917 under the auspices of Dr. Tsai Yuan-Pei, then Chancellor of the Peking National University, where I was at that time a student. It is a correlative change of cultural background for national regeneration. Seen in its proper perspective, it owed its inception to, and derived its inspiration from, the great revolutionary movement which began about 1835, just after the Franco-Chinese War. Leaving aside the various reforms and influences brought forth inside the country and from the outside, since the Shang Dynasty down to the Ming, such as the theory of Pa Kua or Eight Diagrams, Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and other Chinese philosophies and theories of life brought by "barbarian" invasion which caused the expansion or degeneration of Chinese civilization, the cultural conflict during the last two or three decades between the Chinese civilization and that of the west is simply striking. Dr. Hu Shih, at present Dean of the Faculty of Letters of the Peking National University, once stated that the problem of China is how to bring about a satisfactory adjustment in a situation where an ancient civilization has been forced against its will into daily and intimate contact with the new civilization of the west. The old civilization has clearly proved itself hopelessly inadequate in solving

pressing problems of national existence, economic pressure, social and political disorder, and intellectual confusion and anarchy. The new invading civilization has, however, for reasons hitherto never fully understood or expounded, not succeeded so far in either grafting itself upon the old traditional culture or becoming extensively adopted and assimilated as a base or ferment in working out a new cultural equilibrium. At the end of the 19th century Kang Yu Wei and Liang Chi Chao, advocates of a constitutional monarchy, started to revolutionize Chinese culture, but they never experienced first hand contact with western cultural foundations, deriving their knowledge of modern thought only from very inadequate translations of western political philosophers such as Montesquieu, J.S. Mill and Spencer, and although their influence was very great at the time, it could not, from its very nature, have become a lasting one. Therefore, their movement has been considered only as the preparatory period of China's modern intellectual development. The general tendency in those days was to value western civilization merely in its applied scientific aspect; it was identified with technical methods rather than with scientific theory. Chang Chih Tung, the famous Viceroy of the Hu Provinces, pointed out in his celebrated pamphlet *China's Only Hope* that education should remain on the old classical basis, while drawing upon the technical and material side of the western system, which was superior, but that the Chinese basis was best on the spiritual side, on account of its emphasis on morality. A blending of the two, he argued, would result in a civilization superior to either—but, in practice, the basis of this new civilization was forced into the back ground by the exigencies of the moment. The result, unfortunately, was the creation of a deculturalized and denationalized group of students. When effective leadership of the modern Chinese intelligentsia passed into the hands of Dr. Tsai Yuan Pei, the Chinese intellectuals connected with the Peking National University discovered the secret of what eventually was to become the basis of a national regeneration. They aimed at a rebirth of the old Chinese civilization by discovering the foundation of western strength, and absorbing its essence with their own philosophy, so as to effect a new synthesis on an intellectual and spiritual basis. Thus the new cultural movement, which harmonizes personal and moral culture with social service and industrial efficiency, was inaugurated. It is considered as China's national renaissance, and supplied the very factor which was needed to give Dr. Sun Yat Sen's teachings a secure foundation.

It may be stated that this new cultural movement is carried out in two directions. For the masses it popularized education as the only means towards national regeneration. Among students of higher learning it created a spirit of scientific research in things, old and new, Chinese or western. Pei Hua or common language and Tsu Yin Tse Moh or phonetic system were promoted for the use of those who had no training or knowledge of the classical language. In addition to the movement

for simplification of language there was launched a system of free and compulsory education, with an emphasis on vocational training. This has acquired enough momentum to become nation-wide, and forms now a part of the educational programme of the National Government. Thus the traditional educational system which required a Chinese child, when starting his education, to learn to recite by heart a book expounding some principles on morality and political philosophy without understanding what it was all about, is naturally extinguished. The rapid progress in the mass education, which aims at an abolition of illiteracy and the teaching of general civic knowledge and the great development of primary and secondary schools, both in number and quality, over the last ten years, cannot be over estimated.

The history of modern higher education in China has passed through many vicissitudes within a quarter of a century. In 1862 with a view to acquiring the new knowledge of western sciences and foreign languages there were established Tung Wen Kwan in Peking and Kwang Fang Yen Kwan in Shanghai. Different technical schools were founded after 1866 for the study of navigation, engineering, telegraphy, medicine, and naval and military sciences. These subjects, according to the view-point of the then reformers, were the instruments through which the western countries had gained power and supremacy. It was, therefore, with utilitarian motives that higher education in the modern sense, in those days, was promoted in China. Subsequently the School of Chinese and Western Studies in Tientsin, the Nanyang College in Shanghai and the Metropolitan University in Peking, which was later called the National Peking University, were established, and a number of the old Soo Yuans or academies in the various provinces were converted into universities. These institutions had but an ephemeral existence. They helped, however, to lay the foundation of modern higher education in China.

After the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 and the Boxer Uprising in 1900, the lack of co-ordination and inadequacy of the Chinese educational system was deeply felt. Upon the petition of Chang Pei Hsi, then Minister of Education, the regulation on the Metropolitan University of Peking was issued in January, 1902. In this three years were prescribed for the preparatory department. In July, the Imperial decree on school systems was promulgated in accordance with which the university was to continue a research department, called Ta Hsueh Yuan, together with seven proper departments and a preparatory department. The Ta Hsueh Yuan was designed for purposes of higher research and the time limit for the period of studies was not prescribed by law. The university proper offered a three or four years' course, while three years was required in the preparatory department. This was the beginning of the system of classification into departments in the Chinese universities. In 1903 a new decree was issued, and it provided that a university was



to consist of the Tung Ju Yuan or the department of learned scholars besides the university proper and a preparatory department. The status of the department of learned scholars is similar to that of the Ta Hsueh Yuan. The university proper contained eight departments, namely, classics, literature, science, law and government, commerce, medicine, agriculture and technology. The preparatory department was to offer courses of basic knowledge in philosophy and science. Before the downfall of the Manchu Dynasty, there were already three government universities in China, the Metropolitan University at Peking, the Pei Yang University at Tientsin and the University of Shansi at Taiyuanfu. The years between 1861 and 1900 may be called the period of embryonic development in the history of Chinese higher education, while between 1901 and 1911, the period of formation.

The period of the growth and development of institutions of higher learning in China began in the first year of the Republic. In July, 1912 a Provisional Education Conference was appointed by the Ministry of Education to discuss educational policies and programmes of the new régime. A resolution urging the revision of the school system was passed; and as a result of recommendations made by the conference, the law on school system was issued in September, incorporating the law on universities. This law was again thoroughly revised in 1913, and by dropping the college of classical studies a university was to have a college of arts and sciences. The law on technical schools was also promulgated. The aim of the technical school was defined as the instruction of higher knowledge and the training of technicians and experts. Many technical schools, such as pharmacy, agriculture, fine arts, music, mercantile marine and so on, were established. In 1915 President Yuan Shek Kai divided the country into six districts in each of which a higher normal school was established. Besides this, the country was also divided into four university districts and each was provided with a university.

In 1917 when the new cultural movement was on the way of development, many changes were made to reform the quality of the institutions of higher learning. Current world educational tendencies and China's urgent needs were studied. Requirements for admission of students, period of instruction, elective courses, and the credit system of universities were definitely specified in laws. Degrees such as "Bachelor of Arts" and "Bachelor of Sciences" were offered to regular university graduates who passed the requirements satisfactorily. Strong faculties composed of scholars who received good training and experience at home and abroad were founded. We see, now and then, in Chinese universities, visiting professors from universities in other parts of the world. In short, the new cultural movement developed a modern academic atmosphere in institutions of higher learning in China, and have made the public

realize the necessity of reforming their quality to follow the development of national cultural awakening.

When the National Government was inaugurated in Nanking in 1927, a national academy—Ta Hsueh Yuan—was established with functions similar to those of the Ministry of Education. At the same time, the university district system was introduced, by which the president of the university was responsible for the educational administration of the respective district. Following the National Educational Conference in 1928, the National Academy was converted into the Ministry of Education and the university district system was abolished the next year. Laws and regulations relative to the composition of a college, a university and technical school, were issued. The purpose of university education is defined as the study of advanced knowledge, and the training of scholars and experts, while that of technical schools is the teaching of applied science and the training of technicians.

With the increase of universities, the National Government was confronted with the most acute problem in higher education, namely, the uneven geographical distribution of universities, independent colleges and technical institutes. In 1935, out of 110 institutions, Shanghai alone claimed 24, Peiping seventeen, while Kwangtung had only eight. There were only two independent colleges in the North-western Provinces and three in Central Provinces, while no institution of higher education had yet been set up in provinces such as Kweichow, Suiyuan, Ninghsia and Sinkiang. Obviously the result is a congestion of universities in a few cities and not proportional to the density of population or regional needs. Although this deplorable situation is remedied to a certain extent by the rapid development of communications, the National Government, however, has not ceased to help to provide for an equal opportunity in higher education in regions where institutions are needed. The steady development of higher education, like other things, depends upon a solid financial basis. The National Government, in spite of financial difficulties, has appropriated definite sources of revenue, not only sufficient for government institutions, but also enough to subsidize private institutions of high standing.

In 1935, the Ministry of Education promulgated the Provisional Regulations governing the organizations of graduate schools in the universities and prepared the Draft Law on the Conferring of Academic Degrees of three grades, namely, Baccalaureate, Master and Doctorate. The policy of sending students abroad was also changed. No student will be sent abroad by the Government unless he has graduated from a university or an independent college and has done research work or served in a public capacity for two years. Preference is given to science, agriculture, technology, medicine and other subjects of natural sciences. In order to make my explanation clear, let me summarize the evolution

of our modern higher education. The development of higher education in China in the modern sense may be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century. At first we saw the formation, while the first sixteen years of the Republic witnessed the growth and development of universities and other higher educational institutions. Since the establishment of the National Government in Nanking, co-ordination and reorganization in higher education were assured. No previous government had ever adopted such a definite policy as did the National Government towards higher education. The shifting of emphasis, the amalgamation of institutions, the ensuring of financial stability, the equalization of university standard, the improvement of personnel and equipment, the supervision of academic institutions and the change of attitude towards the sending of students abroad were measures designed to lay a solid foundation for modern higher education. Generally speaking, the new cultural movement, according to Professor P.C. Chang, embraces, firstly, a close analysis of concrete needs of China to-day; secondly, the search for ideas, both modern and past, both western and Chinese; and thirdly, inventiveness in creative adjustment. China has, as one may say, at last been able to see in education a way for her revival and resurrection.

In this connexion, I would like to mention that the Ministry of Education also realized the importance of international intellectual co-operation, aiming at the creation of a new link between the major intellectual currents of the world by which a spirit of international understanding as a means of preserving peace may be fostered. The Secretary-General of the League of Nations was requested in March, 1931, to assist in establishing relations between principal Chinese universities and universities of other countries. The League was also requested to help the Chinese Government to find advisors who would assist in improving the educational system and in promoting intercourse between intellectual centres in China and abroad. The appointment of Professor P.C. Chang as the delegate in the Eighteenth Plenary Session of the International Committee on intellectual co-operation held at Geneva in July, 1936, to urge international intellectual co-operation shows China's interest in this matter.

In conclusion, allow me to say that what the world is witnessing in China to-day, with such tremendous and rapid development of political, social and cultural reformation as I have broadly outlined in the foregoing paragraphs, is not the decline of the nation, but the pangs of an ancient civilization in process of rebirth. China had been for a long time, and possibly, but, unfortunately, in some quarters still is, regarded as the most conservative of countries, enslaved by worship of the past, incapable of change and adoption to new conditions, and therefore doomed to extinction when confronted with an aggressive alien civilization. But the present facts as are seen in China convince us that under conditions of stimulus, the Chinese mind can and has shown itself as responsive and

versatile as that of the people in any other part of the world. The history of China, ante-dating that of the West by many centuries, shows beyond doubt that the Chinese are capable of the highest cultural achievement. Through all of the chaos and confusion inevitable during such a period of transition, the vigorous pulse of life can be felt in the twentieth century. China is groping her way towards a new orientation of national life—an orientation that will combine all that was best in traditional China with the finest political and mechanical experiences of the west. Dr. Sun Yat Sen emphasized the need for social co-operation and international peace, and preached the avoidance of struggles between classes and rivalry between nations, with the ultimate ideal of a classless society. The structure of the new social order in China to-day is based on a national horizon rather than on local-vertical divisions.

The national regeneration work, however, is far from being completed. Dr. Sun Yat Sen died on 12th March, 1925, and left a message to the Chinese people as follows:—

“For 40 years I have devoted myself to the cause of the People's Revolution, whose aim is to win for China national liberty and international equality. From the gathered experience of these 40 years I have come to the realization that the only way to attain the object is by awakening the masses of the people and by joining hands with those nations of the world that treat us as equals in our struggle for the common cause. The revolution is as yet unfinished. I thus exhort my colleagues in the party to continue, until victory is attained, the fight for the realization of our goal in accordance with my plans for national reconstruction, viz., the programme of national reconstruction, the three people's principles, and the manifesto of the first National Congress. Remember especially my recent designs for the convening of a national people's conference, and the abolition of unequal treaties. This should be fulfilled within the shortest possible time. This is my last will and testament.”

Ladies and gentlemen, as the present regeneration work in China is based upon Dr. Sun's principles, you know for what we are striving. Mr. John Hay, one of America's greatest statesmen, once said: “Whoever understands China socially, politically, economically and religiously, holds the key to the world's politics for the next five centuries.” Geographically, Australia is a nation in the Pacific Ocean. Commercially, far-sighted men can see that a real economic co-operation between Australia and China on a basis of reciprocity that would result in mutual advantage, is primarily important. Is it not urgent that a closer relationship and a better understanding be created between our two great nations?



*Morrison at his desk, c. 1910*